

Long Meg of Westminster.

Tabet it, and concluded the fray in a Cup of
Wine.

CHAP. VII.

Containing how Meg went a Shroving; and
how as she came home, she fought with
the Thieves at St. James's Corner, and
helpt Father Willis the Carrier to his
hundred Marks.

AND how not only the Cities of London
and Westminster, but all Counties far
and near, did ring of the manly Courage and
Virtuosity of Meg; insomuch that all her
friends in Lancashire being amazed at it,
and not well knowing what Judgment to give
thereon, desired Father Willis the Carrier to
see her at his next Journey to London, and to
give them a true account of that which was so
wonderful in the report. Did Willis coming
to London, went first to the Ladies that came
up with Meg; and the places where they dwelt
being in his way, he took them along to West-
minster with him, Meg was a little joyful to
see them. It so fell out that it was Shrove-
Tuesday, and Meg having liberty also to go
abroad that day, was going to make merry at
Knights-Bridge, just as the Carrier and those
wenches came in: She took them along with
her, & they spending much of the day with the
repeated discourse of their friends in Lanca-
shire, tired the poor Carrier, in being demanded
again

The Life and Pranks of

again and again how they did, made the time seem shorter then it was. The Night growing on, the Carrier and the two Lasses were importunate to be gone, and so set forth; Meg, who was loath to charge her Friends, stayed a little behind to discharge the Beckoning, and promised to overtake them. It was their fortune at St. James's corner to meet with two Thieves, who waiting for their Prey, set upon them, and took from the Carrier the value of an 100 Marks, and from the Wenches, their Gowns and Purles. Immediately Meg came in to rescue her Friends: the Thieves seeing her in Womans habit made full account of her Purle and Gown: But Meg seldom going defenceless, did so lay about her, that the Thieves taking respite or breath, told her, That she was the stoutest and vallest Girl that ever they met with, and therefore for her sake, they bid the other Lasses to take their Gowns and Purles, and farewell, and pray for good fellows. Nay, you cowardly Knaves, quoth she, we must not part so, I must have an hundred Marks out of your flesh, and therefore play me this fair play; you are two to one, lay down your hundred Marks to our Gowns & Purles, and win all, and wear all. Content, quoth the Thieves, and because thou art so lusty, when we have well belaboured thee, we'll turn thee into thy Smock, and let thee go home naked.

Long Meg of Westminster.

Do your worst (quoth she) now Ladies pray for me: with that she buckled with these 2 knaves, and hurt the one loze, and beat down the other, that they intreated her upon their knees to save their lives. I will (quoth she) upon Condition. Any condition, said they, whatsoever. Harry then, quoth she, the conditions shall be these:

First. That you never hurt Women, nor any company that Women are in.

2. That you ne'r hurt poor Impotent Men.

3. That you rob no children nor Innocent.

4. That you rob no Pack-men, nor Carriers, for their Goods and Money is none of their own.

5. No manner of distressed persons, but of this I give you this exception; That as for every rich Farmer, and Churlish Cuff, that hoards up money, such spare not, for they let the poor want, therefore let them feel your fingers.

Are you content (quoth she) to agree to these conditions? we are, said they. I have no book about me, but because you shall observe your Oath firm, swear upon the skirt of my Smock; It grieved them to be so disgraced, but fear made them do any thing, and taking up her Smock, they laid their hands on it, and said,

Be we leas, or be we loath, by the skirt of your Smock, we will ne'r break our Oaths.

With that they kissed her Smock, and rose up:

The Life and Pranks of
up : and Meg gave the wenches their Gowns
and Purles, and giving Father Willis the
hundred Marks, she bid them farewell.

The Men desiring to know who it was that
had so lustily beswinged them, said unto her;
Say Mistress, for all this sorrow, let us have
so much labour at your hands, as to tell your
Name : she smiled and made them this answer.
If any one ask you, who carried your bones,
Say *Long Meg of Westminster* met with you
(once.

At this they went away full of grief, that a
Whoman had given them the foil.

CHAP. VIII.

Containing how *Harry* the Oastler was
prest, and how she used the Constable
and Captain, and how she took Press-
money to go to *Bullioign*.

In those days there fell a great strife between
the French King, and Henry King of
England, who resolved to levy an Army of
Men, and to pass into France with a mighty
Raby, for which there was a general Press
through England, and especially in and about
London and Westminster. In this hurly-
burly it so fell out, that the Constable of West-
minster Pressed *Harry* the Oastler, who was
servant with *Long Meg*, who being loath to
go, did so prebail with Meg, that she began to
intreat the Constable, and to tell him, That
he

Long Meg of Westminster.

he was the only Ray of her Masters house:
and if he were killed, her Masters were un-
done.

All this could not persuade the Constable,
but Harry must needs go. Whereupon Meg
said he should not, and so they grew to words,
till Meg lent the Constable a box on the ear:
at which the Street was in an uproar, that
the Constable was beaten for the killing of
a Man. The Capt. in hearing this came down
himself, and demanded who had struck the
Constable? Harry (quoth Meg) that have I,
and were it not that I love all Soldiers,
honour a Captain. &c. I would strike thee too.
At that the Captain laugh; nay, hee
laugh (quoth Meg) for I dare do as much as an-
ny in the troop, either in adorning my colours,
tossing a Pike, or discharging a Piece, for
proof quoth she, (and she snatched a Caliver
from ones hand that stood by) see how well I
can both charge and discharge; which she per-
formed with such readiness and dexterity,
that they all wondered at her: and therefore
Captain (quoth she) Kill not our Man, but
if thou needs must have one out of our House,
give me Kill-mony, and I will go under
your Colours. At this all laught out-right,
and the Captain gave her an Angel, where-
upon according to promise, he made provision
for passage, and went with them to Bullington.

The Life and Pranks of

CHAP. IX.

How she beat the frenchmen from the Walls of Bulloign, and behaved her self so Valiantly, that the King gave her eight pence a day for her life.

King Henry having passed over the Sea, he camped before Bulloign, which place he won, so that he became absolute Master of the Town, and placed a Garrison in it; whereupon the Dauphin of France came down with a great power, and lay before Bulloign, and one night taking advantage of the time, he slew one of the Centinels, and was discovered by the Watch, who straight did beat an Alarm: but they within were so sound asleep, that they made but little hast to relieve them. Meg being a Handmaid in the Town, and up late at work, did rouse the rest of the Women, and with a Halbert in her hand, came to the Walls on which some of the French were entered; where she demeaned her self so stoutly, and caused her Women Soldiers to throw down Stones and scalding Water in such abundance, that murther their Teeth, she did beat the French from the Walls, before the Souldiers in the Town were up in Arms; and at the Sally, she was one of the foremost, with her Halbert in her hand to follow the Chase. The report of which deed being come to the Ear of the King, he, for his life time, did allow her eight pence a day.

CHAP.

Long Meg of Westminster.

C H A P. X.

Containing the Combat she fought with a Frenchman, before the Walls of Bulloign, and what was the issue of the Combat.

DURING the time of these transactions, there was a Frenchman, who in his brado would often come within shot, and take the Pike, and so go his way; Meg observing the Pike, desired that a Drum might be sent, to signify that there was a young Drispling, a private Soldier, that at a push of Pike would try a beny with him: Upon this it was agreed, and a place appointed between both Armies, where they should meet, & fight it out to Death. On the set day, the Frenchman came in all jollity, and rolled his Pike before the Walls, Meg being ready, went out & met him, & without any salutation fell to blows; where, after a long and desperate Combat, Meg overthrew him, and pulling out her Simier cut off his Head, then taking off her Bagonet, her hose fell about her Ears, whereby the Frenchmen perceived she was a Woman, and the English giving a great shout, Meg, by a Drum, sent to the Dauphin his Souldiers head, and told an English Woman sent it. The Dauphin did highly commend her, & sent her an 100 Crowns for her valour.

C H A P. XI.

Containing her coming into England, how she was Married, and how she behaved herself to her Husband.

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The Life and Pranks of

The Wars in France being ended, Meg came to her old residence at Westminster; she married a proper tall man, a Soldier who used her very well; and she returned him all obedience, concealing nothing but his content; yet because he had heard what exploits she had done, & how Manlike she was; on a time called her aside into a back Chamber & stripping her into her Petticoat, disclosed her one Stoff, and took another himself & said to her, That because he heard she was so Manlike, as to beat all she met with, he should try her Manhood; & therefore had her take in, Job Cudge she would. She replied nothing but held down her head; whereupon he gave her three or four blows, and she in Submission, fell down upon her knees, & asking him to hold his hand, and pardon her. Why, quoth he, why take ye not the Stick? Husband, quoth she, whatsoever I have done to others, it behoveth me to be Obedient to you; and never shall it be said, though I Cudge a Knave that wrongs me, that Long Meg shall be her Husbands Master, and therefore use me as you please: at these Words they grew Friends and never quarrelled any more.

CHAP XL

Containing a pleasant Jest, how she used the merry Miller of Epping, in Essex.

ME going on foot one day with sundry of her Neighbours, to make merry in Essex,

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Long Meg of Westminster.

Essex, it being a great frost, & none with them but a young Scippling of fourteen years of age, it chanced that they went by Epping Mill, where the Miller looked out (for the wind blew fair, and the Sails went merrily) the little Boy, that was a Wag, thought to have been merry with the Miller, and therefore called to him put out, put out Miller, put out: what shall I put out Boy, quoth the Miller? Marry, quoth the Boy, a Thiebes head, and Tythes pair of ears, put out Miller, put out.

At this the Miller in a great rage, came down and beat the boy. Meg stepped to him, and would have laid his hand, and the Miller lent her three or four good bangs over the Shoulders, Meg felt it smart, and getting in with the Miller, did taking the stick out of his hands, with which he cutt'd him to some tune; and when she had done, she lent the Boy up the Millers stairs for an empty Sack, and put the Miller in it, all but the Head, and then fastning him to the Rope, wherewith he pulled up the Sacks. She haled him half way, and there let him hang. The poor Miller cryed out for help, and if by fortune his Wife had not been coming he had been almost killed; and the Mill (for want of Corn) set on fire. Thus Meg plagued the saucy Miller of Epping.

CHAP.

The Life and Pranks of
C H A P. XIII.

Containing the mad Pranks she played with
a Waterman of Lambeth.

On a certain time, Long Meg had an occasion to cross the water with a Sculler from Westminster; When she was Landed, she liberally drew out her Purse, and gave the Sculler a Quot; and for all she had dealt so frankly with him, the Sculler did begin to grumble at her, which she hearing came back again, and demanded to which of them she had behaved her self so ill, as to deserve a hum at their hands? every Man excused himself, for she was beloved of them all: But at last, one said flat, that it was he that brought her over. Then Gentlemen, quoth she, give me leave to revenge my own wrong: They all replied, Do what you will. With that she stepped straight to him, and with a Stretcher did beat him, till he was not able to stir. After that, she tyed him by the middle, to the Stern of the Boat, with a great Rope, and then taking the Sculls her self, she Rowed him over at the Boats Arse, and so crossed the water once or twice; and when she had thoroughly washed him, she landed him at Westminster, and bid him remember how he misused an honest face; and taking a piece of Chalk, wrote on the Wall hard by the Straits.

*If any Man ask, who brought this to pass,
Say it was done by a Lancashire Lass. Chap,*

Long Meg of Westminster.

C H A P. XIV.

Containing how she kept a House at Islington, and what Laws she had there to be observed.

After Marriage, she kept a Visitallings-House of her own at Islington, to which there resorted more Gentlemen, Gentlewomen, & others other brave Courtiers, & other men of all Degrees than to any House in Islington. By reason of which, her House being much spoken of, the Constable one night came to search, and would not be answered, but would needs be an Eye-witness of what guests were in her House. Whereupon Meg (in a great choller) did start up in her Smock, & taking a great Cudgel into her hand, she opened the door for the Constable, & said, come in Master Constable, and let me see your Warrant, for what suspected persons you seek for in my house. Take heed you go not an inch beyond your Text, for if you do, were you a Constable of Welbet, I will so well belabour you with my Cudgel, as ever Constable was belaboured since Islington stood; and when you have done, you shall carry none out of my house this night, for I will be answerable for all that are now in my House. The Constable seeing her frown, and fearful of her Bastinado, told her quietly he would take her word, and so departed. Meg (because in her house) she would have a device above other Visitallers (as in-
deed

The Life and Pranks of, &c.

deed she surpassed them all in the excess of company) did hang up a Table, wherein were contained these Principles;

First, That what Gentleman or Yeoman did come into her house and had any charge about him, and made it privy to her or any in her house, if he lost it there by any neglect, she would repay it: e're he departed; but if he did not reveal it, and after say he was robbed, he should have ten Whinnadoes with a Tudgel, and be turned out of doors.

Secondly, Whosoever came in and called for Meat, and had no Money to pay for it, should have a good box on the Ear, and a Cross made upon his back, that he should be taken notice of, and ne'r be suffered to drink more in the house.

Thirdly, That if any good fellow came in and bewailed his Case that he was hungry and wanted Money, he should have his belly full of Meat at freecost, and money in his Purse according to his calling.

Fourthly, That if any Ruffler came in and made an Ale house brawl, and when he had done, would not go manfully into the field, and fight a bout or two with Long Meg, the Maids of the house should bye-beat him, and so thrust him out of doors.

These and many such Principles, had she in her house, that made her house quiet.

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